Unawareness of elected Panchayat representatives

†522. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that decisions taken in Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha are changed by the block officers;

(b) whether Government are aware that more than sixty per cent representatives elected at Panchayat level, especially eighty per cent women are not aware of laws related to Panchayati Raj system and rights thereunder; and

(c) if so, the schemes formulated by Government to provide information and training regarding various laws and rights of Panchayati Raj system and whether any such type of programme has been conducted?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Instances have come to the attention of the Union Government of this having happened but as the implementation of Panchayati Raj falls in the domain of State Governments, it is entirely possible that a larger number of such instances are in the knowledge of the State Governments concerned and it is for them to take appropriate action.

(b) No, Sir. Government are not aware of the source of the figures given nor of their accuracy but it is accepted that awareness of laws and rights needs augmentation and the Union Government stands ready to assist State Governments, on request, in this regard.

(c) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has initiated the Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan to strengthen the elected women of the PRIs under the aegis of the "Chalo Gaon Ki Ore" rubric of the National Commission for Women. A core group comprising selected EWRs, activists, academics etc. is nominated by the State Government/ Government of India to draft and facilitate a draft women's charter for the EWRs of the state stating thereon their particular issues. Subsequently, all women Zila Pramukhs, all women Pradhans and selected women Sarpanchs from each district of the state, as well as Core Group members and some eminent personalities are invited to a said two day conference of panchayat women. A women's charter comprising all the major points distilled from the discussions with the women representatives of the PRIs is then finalized.

Most EWRs see themselves as isolated and unorganized, functioning without the support of a structure and have spoken of the need to form into groups or associations so as to be part of a forum that addresses their special needs in a largely male-dominated social and political milieu. The Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan has been conceptualized to initiate awareness about the gender issues in governance and to facilitate Elected Women Representatives in performing their mandate to the best

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of their abilities. So far, conferences of elected women representatives, activists, NGOs, eminent personalities have been held as under:–

1. Udaipur (Rajasthan) – 23rd and 24th April, 2006.
2. Patiala (Punjab) – 17th and 18th July, 2006.
3. Bangalore (Karnataka) – 5th September, 2006.
4. Dehradun (Uttaranchal) – 24th September, 2006.
5. Imphal (Manipur) – 4th and 5th October, 2006.
6. Panaji (Goa) – 19th October, 2006.
7. Sikkim (Gangtok) – 26th and 27th April, 2007.
8. Chhattisgarh (Raipur)- 26th and 27th July, 2007.

Besides the State-level Conferences, a one-day divisional-level conference was also held on 29th November, 2006 at Jaipur in Rajasthan. Such conferences are planned for other states as well. The Government supports capacity building training programmes for elected women representatives of Panchayats so that they can effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities as envisaged in the Constitution, to take an active role in the matters relating to their village and taluk.

As regards enhancing awareness of laws and rights for the generality of elected Panchayati Raj representatives, the Ministry has been funding civil society organizations and State Governments on request.

Holding an elective office

523. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the meaning of holding an elective office as per the provisions of Rule 15 of the Central Civil Services(Conduct) Rules, 1964;

(b) whether contesting an election for the post of Delegate, Kendriya Bhandar is holding an elective office; and

(c) if so, the action that could be taken against a Government employee who has contested the said election without previous sanction of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) The term 'elective office' has not been defined. Since the term has been used in the context of trade or employment, it is understood to mean an office the appointment to which would be made through an election process by the members of the organization who have a right to vote for electing a person to such a post.

(b) Contesting is different from holding elective office. However, previous sanction of the Government is required for a Government servant for contesting or holding an elective office in the Kendriya Bhandar.

(c) The Government servant will be liable for disciplinary action in case of violation of conduct Rules.